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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [I2](#) [EUN](#) [PKK](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH MILITARY ON PKK: CALM DOWN PUBLIC
RHETORIC AND GET SERIOUS ON COUNTERMEASURES

REF: ANKARA 4186

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

1. (S) Summary: In an extended one-on-one meeting July 20 with Turkish D/CHOD Basbug, Charge cautioned against an accelerating public dispute between Turkey and the US over PKK countermeasures, including &hot pursuit into Iraq. Basbug agreed on the importance of calming down public rhetoric and pointed to his own remarks to the press on July 19 that had been intended to do just that. At the same time, he stressed the dire nature of the PKK problem that Turkey is facing, and warned that lack of real action by the United States against PKK safe havens in northern Iraq would undermine relations with Turkey in the short term while also threatening medium and long-term stability in Iraq. Basbug stated emphatically that he was not calling for a US military assault against the PKK camps, but rather USG interventions to convince Iraqi Kurdish leaders to constrain PKK operations. Basbug stressed Turkish understanding that &hot pursuit would necessitate prior Iraqi consent and characterized this as a course of last resort. He is looking to the September meeting in Ankara with CENTCOM Commander Abazaïd and EUCOM Commander Jones to provide an answer to the Turkish request for hot pursuit options. End Summary.

2. (S) Following several days of frenzied press coverage on the PKK issue, Charge called on Basbug to urge that he and other Turkish officials take action to quiet the public controversy. Charge pointed to the barrage of press coverage in both Ankara and Washington on the issue of Turkish hot pursuit of PKK terrorists into Iraq and stressed that allowing the controversy -- and the dangerous rhetoric -- to continue would be very destructive. Basbug agreed and noted that his July 19 press briefing had been specifically designed to calm things down. He explained that his prepared remarks had focused on the nature of the PKK problem in Turkey and had contained nothing about hot pursuit and the United States. When asked about hot pursuit during the Q&A, he stressed Turkey's understanding that Iraqi consent would be required and noted that this was a course of last resort. In response to a query about US actions against the PKK, Basbug noted that the US, despite operational constraints, very much wanted to help Turkey and he cited the &new order to capture PKK (actually, the addition of PKK names to the high value target list in Iraq) as evidence of US good intentions.

3. (S) When Charge pointed to inflationary remarks made by Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul on &hot pursuit earlier in the day, Basbug said that they were both traveling outside Turkey and suggested that once they saw his own statement, their rhetoric would tone down.

4. (S) Basbug said that the upcoming September meeting of Generals Abazaïd and Jones in Ankara was of critical importance. He argued that we must use this meeting to resolve) positively) the hot pursuit issue and other PKK-related operational questions. In particular, he noted the need to shut down the C-4 depots in Iraq being used by the PKK in their current wave of attacks in Turkey. Basbug also suggested that he would be prepared to consider joint operations against the PKK within Turkey. He replied that he would certainly be willing to consider the matter, along with specific options further, but caveated his response by noting that the final decision would rest with CHOD Ozkok.

5. (U) Iraq REOs minimize considered.

MCELDOWNEY